

Remarks

These remarks respond to the Office Action mailed March 7, 2007. Claims 1-41 are pending in application. The specification has been amended to correct minor defects. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings as including the reference numbers 412, 558, and 562 which are not included in the specification. Applicant has amended paragraphs 0097 and 0040 to include references to these numbers.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner pointed out various informalities in the specification. Applicant has corrected all of the informalities in the amendments to the specification above. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his detailed review of the application.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 1, 3, 7, 21, 35, 36, and 40 as containing various informalities. Applicant has corrected these informalities in the claim amendments above.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 20 as indefinite. Claim 20 has been amended to render it more definite. Applicant respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-7, 9-10, 13, and 35-37 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No 5,315,504 to Lemble. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Lemble is directed to an electronic document approval system for users connected to a network system. The system described in Lemble allows a user to retrieve a pre-stored blank form and fill in the form (col. 2, lines 21-23). The system then computes an approval path for the form based on filled-in form data and predefined rules and then monitors and controls the approval operations (col. 2, lines 23-28). The form may be routed to multiple approvers (col. 2, lines 33-35).

The goal of Lemble is to replace a system wherein paper documents are submitted to another individual, such as a manager, for approval and are lost in the process (col. 1, lines 48-59).

Lemble does not teach or suggest a method for processing “a multi-part form document” including “receiving a request for an operator of the first access device to process the multi-part form document,” “receiving at least one response from the operator of the first access device including information used to complete the a first portion of the multi-part form document,” “determining whether the operator of the second access device is authorized to process the multi-part form document,” and “receiving at least one response from the operator of the second access device including information used to complete the multi-part form document,” as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Therefore, independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Lemble.

The system in Lemble allows an originator wishing to start an approval operation to access a document form and fill it in (col. 10, lines 55-57). The form is then forwarded to one or more approvers who may be authorizers or reviewers (col. 9, lines 53-36). The approvers may “Authorize,” “Reject,” “Approve,” or “Disapprove.” Although certain approvers may be allowed to add or modify data based on the filled-in information from the originator, this is only

accomplished through the use of data modification panels (col. 19, lines 29-34). The approvers do not provide information to complete “a first portion of [a] multi-part form” and “a second portion of the multi-part form” as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Nothing in Lemble teaches or suggests “receiving at least one response from the operator of the first access device including information used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving at least one response from the operator of the second access device including information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document.” In fact, Lemble does not teach or suggest any “multi-part form.” Because Lemble does not teach or suggest these elements of claim 1, Lemble does not anticipate claim 1.

Independent claim 35 is not anticipated by Lemble for similar reasons. Lemble does not teach or suggest a form server is operative with “a first access device” and “a second access device” to “receive information used to populate the at least one section of the multi-part form from the first access device” and “receive information used to populate the at least one additional section of the multi-part form from the second access device” as recited in claim 35. The system in Lemble allows a single originator to fill in a form and forward the completed form to an approver, who may modify or add information to the parts completed by the single originator. Lemble does not teach or suggest a second originator completing a separate part of a multi-part form. Thus, claim 35 is not anticipated by Lemble.

The portions of Lemble referenced by the Examiner do not anticipate these elements of claim 35. The Examiner points to col. 6, lines 9-11 which states that “read/write operations into the data base” are “*followed by an approval step*” (emphasis added). There is no writing information into a multi-part form involved in the approval process in Lemble. While the

Examiner also points to col. 15, lines 57-59, which states that a user may fill in data for a particular document, the Examiner fails to point to any part of Lemble that discloses a form server operative to “receive information used to populate the at least one section of the multi-part form” and “receive information used to populate the at least one additional section of the multi-part form.” The Examiner points to col. 19, lines 32-33 which states that a “user is shown data modification panels and can add or modify data in the document.” This portion of Lemble merely suggests that an approver may add or modify data in the fields already populated by the first user, not provide information “used to populate the at least one additional section of the multi-part form” as recited in claim 35.

Dependent claims 2-4, 6-7, 9-10, and 13 ultimately depend on independent claim 1 and thus incorporate the limitations of claim 1. Because Lemble does not teach or suggest receiving a response from an operator “including information to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and receiving a response from the operator of a second access device “including information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 1, Lemble cannot anticipate any of dependent claims 2-4, 6-7, 9-10, or 13.

Dependent claims 36-37 ultimately depend on independent claim 35 and thus incorporate the limitations of claim 35. As discussed above, because Lemble does not teach or suggest a system operative to “receive information used to populate the at least one section of the multi-part form” and “receiving information used to populate the at least one additional section of the multi-part form” as recited in claim 35, Lemble cannot anticipate claims 36-37.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 8, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Lemble in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,272,506 to Bell. Claims 5, 8, 16, and 17 ultimately depend on independent claim 1.

As discussed above, Lemble fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 1.

Bell is directed to a computerized method for processing forms to provide a trail of all data entry to the forms (col. 2, lines 39-41; col. 5 lines 24-32). The Examiner points to a portion of Bell which states that a user may initial or sign a portion of data entered by that user. Bell, however, fails to remedy the deficiencies of Lemble. Bell fails to teach or suggest a method for “receiving at least one response from the operator of the first access device including information used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving at least one response from the operator of the second access device including information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 1. Lemble and Bell, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest “receiving at least one response from the operator of the first access device including information used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving at least one response from the operator of the second access device including information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 1. Thus, claims 5, 8, 16, and 17 are patentable over Lemble in view of Bell.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Lemble or Bell of any motivation to combine these references. Lemble is directed to a system which manages the routing and approval of a form filled out by an originator. Bell is directed to a system used to authenticate users that change

data in a form in order to provide a record of changed data (col. 5 lines 24-32). Bell does not mention any approval of forms as discussed in Lemble. Because the two systems have dissimilar functionality and purposes, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the routing system in Lemble with the tracking system of Bell.

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,892,900 to Ginter et al. Claims 11 and 12 ultimately depend on independent claim 1. Lemble fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 1.

Ginter is directed to systems and methods for secure electronic commerce. The system described in Ginter is designed to ensure that information is accessed and used only in authorized ways. The portion of Ginter referenced by the Examiner states that most control methods are “at least in part encrypted.” Ginter fails to remedy the deficiencies of Lemble. Ginter fails to teach or suggest a system or method for allowing two authorized users to complete different portions of “a multi-part form document” as recited in claim 1. Lemble and Ginter, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest “receiving at least one response from the operator of the first access device including information used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving at least one response from the operator of the second access device including information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 1. Thus, claims 11-12 are not obvious over Lemble in view of Ginter.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Lemble or Ginter to combine these two references. Lemble is directed to a system which manages the routing and approval of a form filled out by an originator. Ginter is directed to the management and protection of secure information. Because

the two systems have dissimilar functionality and purposes, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the routing system in Lemble with the information management system of Ginter.

Claims 14-15 and 31-32 were rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0032215 to Kyle et al. Claims 14 and 15 depend on independent claim 1. Lemble fails to teach or suggest all of the elements of claim 1.

Kyle is directed to a method for processing forms between a number of entities. The Examiner points to paragraph 0021 of Kyle which discusses a process which permits members to store and retrieve personal medical information in a secure manner using a secure member information repository. Kyle fails to remedy the deficiencies of Lemble. In particular, Kyle fails to teach or suggest a system or method for allowing two authorized users to complete different portions of "a multi-part form document" as recited in claim 1. Kyle simply teaches a form being filled out by one entity and authenticated by a second entity. Lemble and Kyle, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest receiving information to complete different portions of "a multi-part form document." Thus, claims 14 and 15 are not obvious over Lemble in view of Kyle.

Claims 31 and 32 ultimately depend on independent claim 19. As discussed in more detail below, Lemble fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 19. Kyle fails to remedy these deficiencies. Lemble and Kyle, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest receiving information to complete "receiving information...used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document" and "receiving information ...used to complete a

second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 19. Thus, claims 31 and 32, which depend from claim 19, are not obvious over Lemble in view of Kyle.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Lemble or Kyle to combine these two references. Lemble is directed to a system which manages the routing and approval of a form filled out by an originator. Kyle is directed to a method for processing forms between a number of entities, one of which authenticates a form. Because the two systems have dissimilar functionality and purposes, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the routing system in Lemble with the authentication system in Kyle.

Claim 18 was rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of Ginter and U.S. Patent No. 5,898,830 to Wesinger, Jr. et al. Claim 18 ultimately depends on independent claim 1.

As discussed above, Lemble and Ginter fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 1. Wesinger fails to remedy these deficiencies.

Wesinger is directed to a method for providing network security. The Examiner points to a portion of Wesinger which discusses firewalls (col. 4, lines 38-41 and 43-45). Wesinger fails to teach or suggest a system or method for allowing two authorized users to complete different portions of a form. Lemble, Ginter, and Wesinger, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest “receiving...information used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” as well as “receiving...information used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as specifically recited in claim 1. Thus, claim 18, which depends from claim 1, is not obvious over Lemble, Ginter, and / or Wesinger.

Nothing in Wesinger indicates that one skilled in the art would be motivated to combine Wesinger with Lemble or Ginter because the routing system in Lemble, the information

management system of Ginter, and the firewall system of Wesinger each have dissimilar functionality and purposes.

Claims 19-22, 24, 26, 28, and 30 were rejected as obvious over Lemble. The Examiner points out that Lemble requires a user to sign on to a workstation before being allowed to edit and forward a document. But nothing in Lemble teaches or suggests “a method for processing an electronic multi-part form document” comprising “receiving at least one request requesting to process the multi-part form document through a first access device by a representative of a supplier of medical equipment, the at least one request requesting to process the multi-part form document through a first access device including information to uniquely identify the supplier and representative of the supplier” as recited in claim 19. Additionally, nothing in Lemble teaches or suggests “a first access device operated by a representative of a supplier of medical equipment” or “a second access device operated by a representative of a physician.”

Moreover, Lemble does not teach or suggest a method for “receiving information...used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving information...used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as specifically recited in claim 19. Thus, claim 19 is not obvious over Lemble.

Claims 20-22, 24, 26, 28, and 30 are ultimately dependent on independent claim 19. As discussed above, Lemble fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 19. Thus, claims 20-22, 24, 26, 28, and 30, which depend from claim 19, are not obvious over Lemble.

Claims 23, 25, 27, and 29 were rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of Bell. Claims 23, 25, 27, and 19 ultimately depend on independent claim 19.

Lemle fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 19. Bell fails to remedy these deficiencies. Bell is directed to a computerized method for processing forms to provide a trail of all data entry to the forms (col. 2, lines 39-41; col. 5 lines 24-32). Bell does not teach or suggest a method for “receiving information...used to complete a first portion of the multi-part form document” and “receiving information...used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as specifically recited in claim 19. Lemle and Bell, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest all of the elements of independent claim 19. Thus, claims 23, 25, 27, and 29, which depend from claim 19, are not obvious over Lemle in view of Bell.

One skilled in the art would also not be motivated to combine the system disclosed in Lemle with the system disclosed in Bell as discussed above in connection with claims 5, 8, 16, and 17.

Claims 33-34 were rejected as obvious over Lemle in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,862,571 to Martin et al. Lemle does not teach or suggest “A method for processing multi-part form documents” comprising “providing a physician with an application to process at least one of the multi-part form documents” and “providing at least one representative of a supplier with a second application to process at least one of the multi-part form documents” as recited in claim 33. The Examiner references a portion of Lemle stating that blank forms are stored in the system, but the Examiner fails to point to any “application” to process the forms. The Examiner states that the “key” recited in claim 33 is anticipated by the log-on procedure recited in Lemle, but the “key” recited in claim 33 is a result of the physician being approved by a check of the physician’s license status.

The Examiner points to Martin as reciting a check of a physician's license. Martin fails to remedy the deficiencies of Lemble. Martin is directed to a process for creating a medical malpractice insurance policy by linking credentialing information with a medical malpractice insurance application. Martin does not teach or suggest an "application" to process documents or a "key" resulting from the application as recited in claim 33. Further, the portion of Martin cited by the Examiner merely states that "credentialing information" of a doctor may be compiled by an organization. Nothing in Martin teaches or suggests the verification of a license as recited in claim 33. Lemble and Martin, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest "an application to process at least one of the form documents" or "at least one key to access the at least one of the form documents" as specifically recited in claim 33. Thus, claim 33 is not obvious over Lemble in view of Martin.

There is no teaching or suggestion to combine the system disclosed in Lemble with the system disclosed in Martin. Lemble is directed to a system which manages the routing and approval of a form filled out by an originator. Martin is directed to a process for creating a medical malpractice insurance policy by linking credentialing information with a medical malpractice insurance application.. Because the two systems have dissimilar functionality and purposes, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the routing system in Lemble with the credentialing system in Martin.

Claim 34 is dependent on independent claim 33. Lemble and Martin, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest "an application to process at least one of the form documents" or "at least one key to access the at least one of the form documents" as specifically

recited in claim 33. Claim 34, which depends from claim 33, is therefore not obvious over Lemble and Martin.

Claim 38 was rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of "Discount Scooters", reference U on form PTO-892. Claim 38 ultimately depends on independent claim 19, discussed above. Lemble fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 19.

Discount Scooters fails to remedy the deficiencies of Lemble. Discount Scooters is a web page that states that "To file a claim with Medicare, a Certificate of Medical Necessity (CMN) is required." Discount Scooters does not teach or suggest any method for processing a form or a system for processing a form. Lemble and Discount Scooters, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest a method for "receiving information... used to complete a first portion of the multi-part document" and "receiving information... used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document" as recited in claim 19. Thus, claim 38, which depends from claim 19, is patentable over Lemble in view of Discount Scooters.

There is no motivation to combine the routing system described in Lemble with the information disclosed in Discount Scooters. Lemble is directed to a system which manages the routing and approval of a form filled out by an originator. Discount Scooters fails to teach or suggest any method or system for processing forms. Thus, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the system in Lemble with the information provided by Discount Scooters.

Claims 39-41 were rejected as obvious over Lemble in view of "Discount Scooters" and further in view of Form HCFA, reference V on form PTO-892. Claims 39-41 ultimately depend on independent claim 19, discussed above. The combination of Lemble and Discount Scooters

fails to teach or suggest each element of claim 19. Form HCFA fails to remedy these deficiencies.

Form HCFA is merely a medical form. Form HCFA does not teach or suggest any method or system for processing a form. Lemble, Discount Scooters, and Form HCFA, alone or in any known combination, do not teach or suggest a method for “receiving information... used to complete a first portion of the multi-part document” and “receiving information... used to complete a second portion of the multi-part form document” as recited in claim 19. Thus, claims 39-41, which depend on claim 19, are patentable over Lemble in view of Discount Scooters and Form HCFA.

There is no motivation to combine Lemble with Discount Scooters and Form HCFA. Lemble is directed to a system for routing a form for approval. Discount Scooters is a web page discussing how to obtain medical reimbursement for a scooter. Form HCFA is a blank form entitled “Certificate of Medical Necessity.” One skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the routing and approval system of Lemble with the Discount Scooters web page and blank Form HCFA.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the Examiner's rejections has been overcome and that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of the claims and issue a notice of allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

/ Matthew E. Hanley /

Registration No.: 51,773

SONNENSCHN NATH & ROSENTHAL

P.O. Box 061080

Wacker Drive Station, Sears Tower

Chicago, Illinois 60606-1080

(312) 876-8000

Attorney for Applicant